

COMMISSION SELECTS COMBINATION OF CODES
TO ENSURE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF LIFE AND FIRE SAFETY

SACRAMENTO

September 8, 2003

The California Building Standards Commission approved at its July 29, 2003 meeting a combination of model codes from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the International Code Council (ICC) as the basis for the next California building and fire codes. The Commission selected this combination of codes to ensure the highest level of fire and life safety for Californians. These new codes are not scheduled to go into effect until 2006.

The Commission's action, on an 8-2 vote, came after extensive public comment and multiple hearings. The combination of codes selected by the Commission were the 2003 *NFPA 5000 Building Code*; primarily the structural provisions of the ICC's *International Residential Code* covering residential housing, which is approximately 80% of all construction in California; and the *NFPA 1 Uniform Fire Code*.

The hearings, conducted at various state agency locations, included testimony from hundreds of federal, state, and local government officials, as well as interested parties from the private and non-profit sectors and spanned topics from fire safety to disabled access. Throughout the hearings, the Commission members expressed a desire to ensure that California maintains its current standards, which are considered the strongest in the country.

State and Consumer Services Agency Secretary Aileen Adams, the Commission's Chair, noted, "The Commission looks forward to working together with both the NFPA and the ICC to ensure the highest level of protection for Californians."

Under current law (Health and Safety Code Section 18928), the state is required to adopt the most recent edition of model building codes, including any necessary amendments. Model codes are defined as any building code drafted by a private organization. Once adopted, they apply to the majority of buildings in California.

The Department of Housing and Community Development, the Division of the State Architect, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development have the most comprehensive regulatory authority over California's diverse building codes. These entities are charged with amending the model codes and are currently hard at work developing an implementation plan for modifying them so they are usable in California and maintain current codes, which are the strongest in the nation.

In a separate action on May 14, 2003, the Commission adopted the 2002 NFPA's National Electrical Code. The Commission is scheduled to complete its work on the balance of codes under its purview through the consideration of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials' 2003 Uniform Plumbing Code and Uniform Mechanical Code starting in October 2003, and the California Energy Commission's energy codes in January 2004.

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